

Support S.21-0377 for sustainable recycling of food residuals

TO: Sen. Philip Baruth  
Sen. Thomas Chittenden  
Sen. Virginia Lyons  
Sen. Chris Pearson  
Sen. Kesha Ram  
Sen. Michael Sirotkin  
Rep. Carol Ode  
Rep. Bob Hooper

cc. Caroline Gordon, Rural Vermont

FROM: Sylvia Knight, Earth Community Advocate  
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DATE: February 15, 2021

RE: S.21-0377, food residuals

This state has worked hard for years to find ways to recycle materials, create sustainable systems to reuse many kinds of products in our economy, and create policies to strengthen this work of recycling in the Universal Recycling Law (URL). After all, we are not separate from the Earth but are members of one biological system.

I understand the purpose of S.21-0377 is to regulate and prioritize the use of food residuals in compost foraging for farm animals as “farming” under the jurisdiction of VT Agency of Agriculture Food & Markets (VAAF), and to exempt food residuals from regulation as solid waste under the jurisdiction of Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) which requires permits for its use.

Compost is not waste but valuable materials needed for reuse in Earth’s economy. So I urge the passage of S.21-0377 to enable and encourage poultry farmers to incorporate food residuals into their operations, to create necessary exemptions for poultry farm managers/owners from ANR regulations and permit requirements. The State needs to encourage, rather than discourage, the return of foodstuffs to the farming community, to recognize this aspect of the cycle of life. This will help meet the goals, the purpose and requirements of the URL.

As a child I watched my father incorporate our “food residuals” into our large compost pile near the vegetable garden in western Massachusetts, which produced a fair amount of food for us in the late 1940s, 50s, and 60s. While we did not have chickens, I learned the value of returning Earth’s valuable materials to Earth for the continuing cycle of life. I am glad that I can contribute now to composting efforts in Chittenden County, and hope that regulating food residuals as farming can enable farmers to build sustainable enterprises feeding poultry and creating compost products in Vermont.

Whether we live in the country or in the city, we can help Earth Community heal from exploitation and wasteful practices, and enable farmers who practice earth-healing methods within our state.

Thank you for considering my comments .